Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
March 18, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: D. Angersola; D. Barlow; P. Barlow; W. Barney; J. Bielot; E. Dillon; L. D'Aquila; D. DiStefano; J. Esty; R. Esty; P. Govert: P. Griswold; A. Hatfield, J. Hatfield; J. James; S. Jezek; S. Kinsman; J. Leatherbee; D. Mackinnon; N. Mackinnon; S. Martel; B. Matthews; K. McRae; E. Morgen; S. Palmer; M. Pierson; J. Pointkowski; A. Ponanski; J. Tryon-Ranaudo; Atty. O. Weaver; L. White; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Gelston called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Gelston reviewed the meeting agenda.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting of February 21, 2026, Special Meeting of February 25, 2026, Special Meeting of March 3, 2026, Special Meeting of March 4, 2026, Regular Meeting of March 4 and Special Meeting of March 6, 2026

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 21, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 25, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 3, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 4, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 4, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Gelston, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 6, 2026. Mr. Dill abstained from the vote and the motion passed by a majority of ayes.

4. Correspondence: There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

5. First Selectmen's Report

Mr. Gelston reported the following:

- The Board of Selectmen and Board of Education submitted their FY2026-2027 budgets to the Board of Finance for its review.
- Public Works is planning to restart its road improvement projects in the spring. Great Hillwood Road will probably need drainage work completed before it can be repaved.
- The Public Works Snow/Ice Removal is $54k over-budget for FY2025-2026.
- The Town is still working on reducing speeding on the roads; however, it is still waiting for the DOT's approval to post "Speeding Strictly Enforced" signs at the Towns entry points.
- The Ambulance Association and Fire Department are working to finalize their agreement with a goal of providing the best emergency medical response service at the best cost.
- One contractor is still interested in constructing a cell tower on Hood Lane, contingent upon positive feedback from the cell phone companies and the Siting Council.
- The Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Committee held its first meeting on March 16th and will be submitting its recommendation to the Board of Selectmen in 90 days.
- The Town is planning for its America 250 celebration; a reenactment of the reading of the Declaration of Independence will be held on July 11th at the First Church of Christ, Congregational.

6. Public Comment: The following public comments were raised at the meeting:

Denise DiStefano – stated she supports the libraries' request for a new building. She also reviewed the previous First Selectman's relationship with the Ambulance Association (EHAA) and the Association's challenges to break even on the cost of their services. She expressed her disappointment that the Board of Finance refused to release Contingency funds set aside last fiscal year for the Ambulance Association without a copy of the addendum, signed by the Association and the Fire Department, to the existing agreement with the Town. Ms. DiStefano asked the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and taxpayers to support the mission of the EHAA and to support the funding it needs to do its "critical lifesaving work".

Laurie D'Aquila – provided clarification on previous statements she has made regarding the East Haddam Ambulance Association. She stated that the Ambulance Association responded to 800-900 calls per year; its performance is excellent but they still need financial assistance from the Town. She stated that the impact of low reimbursement rates are a state-wide and national crisis for all emergency medical response organizations. She confirmed that although the EHAA had recently signed on new volunteers, volunteer staffing is still low and the Association is working with the Town and Fire Department to supplement staffing, decrease operating expenses, and increase income.

Ms. D'Aquila stated that the Ambulance Association did not bring a lawsuit against the Town; also, that it is not paying out on a lawsuit brought against them by a former employee since they have insurance coverage for such issues. Ms. D'Aquila stated that the Ambulance

Association plans to continue to provide service to the Town, she thanked everyone for their support and provided her contract information if anyone any further questions or comments.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street or 7 Hood Lane: Mr. Gelston advised that one company still has an interest in building a cell tower at Hood Lane but is waiting for feedback from the cell phone companies and the Siting Council.

B. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: There was no update on this agenda item.

C. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: There was no update on this agenda item.

D. New Library Discussion – Charge for Exploratory Committee: Mr. Gelston read a draft charge for a New Library Exploratory Committee submitted by the supporters of a new library building. He stated his office has suggested a few alterations to the charge and that the Board of Selectmen will review the draft charge presented with suggestions and finalize language which can be approved at an upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting.

Ms. Zemienieski advised that a balance of $3,981.89 remains in a Library Feasibility capital budget line from the previous new Library Study Committee which can be use by the Exploratory Committee. Next steps for assembling a New Library Exploratory Committee were discussed.

8. New Business

A. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (EHSCIP, RA): The following Board, Commission or Committee changes were considered at the meeting:

East Haddam Schools Capital Improvements Building Committee

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to an email reforwarded from current Board of Education Chairman Keira Thompson regarding changes that should have occurred in 2023. He noted that the email had not been received or had been mistakenly deleted and, since the Board of Education was not aware that the resignation and appointment recommendation had not been received by the Board of Selectmen, Kiera Thompson had replaced Ms. Stricker and been actively participating as the Board of Education liaison on the Capital Improvements Building Committee since 2023. He stated that the Board of Education requested the Board of Selectmen make this appointment retroactive to November 29, 2023.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Patricia Stricker as the Board of Education liaison on the East Haddam Schools Capital Improvement Building Committee retroactive to November 29, 2023. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to accept the recommendation of the Board of Education to appoint Kiera Thompson as the Board of Education liaison on the East Haddam Schools Capital Improvements Building Committee retroactive to November 29, 2023. Unanimous aye.

Redevelopment Agency

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a letter of resignation in their meeting packets from Redevelopment Agency member Caitlin Taylor.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny to accept, with deep regret, the resignation of Caitlin Taylor from the Redevelopment Agency. Unanimous aye.

B. Tax Refunds: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to one tax refund in their meeting packets.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to award a tax refund in the amount presented:

- $1,605.00 to Cynthia Demming

Unanimous aye.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: Mr. Sevigny reported that the Redevelopment Agency will hold a public workshop on March 26th at 6:00 p.m. at the Municipal Office Complex to review a draft of the master plan for the East Haddam Village area. He stated that this is the public's opportunity to provide input on the final master plan for the area.

B. Other: There was no additional Selectmen discussion.

10. Public Comment: The following public comments were raised at the meeting:

Library Director Evelyn Morgen – thanked the supporters of a new library building for coming out and advocating for the project. She stated that the previous Study Committee's report of 2022 includes a good deal of information that can be updated by the proposed New Library Exploratory Committee and used to establish a building committee. She reviewed the challenges of operating in the Town's two library buildings and reviewed cost savings that could be expected by consolidating their services into a new building.

Director Morgen further noted that the libraries plan to kick-off the Town's America 250 Celebration with at live music event at the Grange Hall on April 17th.

Students Adalyn Hatfield and Rose Esty – spoke in support of the Town undertaking a project to construct a new library building. They noted the lack of handicapped accessibility at the existing library buildings and reviewed several benefits of a new building, including

environmentally friendly features, potential for storage of Town historical records, and providing more gathering space for social interactions.

Jessica Hatfield – advised that her Master's Degree capstone project was research on the Town's two libraries and ultimately also included information on the Moodus development plan. She reviewed the problems with the existing library buildings and discussed potential benefits of a new library building, including expanded community socialization and an economic draw to the Moodus area.

11. Executive Session - Discussion re Threatened/Pending Litigation-Private Roads

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to enter into executive session at 7:57 p.m. to discuss threatened/pending litigation-private roads and to invite attorney Owen Weaver, Don Angersola and Linda Zemienieski into this session. Unanimous aye.

Selectmen returned to regular session at 9:03 p.m. No motions or decisions were made.

12. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary